

## Mississippi trial court judges elect conference officers

May 4

Mississippi trial court judges elected officers at the Spring Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Biloxi on April 27.

Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo was elected chair of the Conference of Chancery Judges. Chan-



cellor Joseph Kilgore of Philadelphia was elected vice-chair, and Chancellor John A. Hatcher of Booneville was elected secretary-treasurer.

Circuit Judge Prentiss G. Harrell of Hattiesburg was elected chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Judges. Circuit Judge Winston Kidd of Jackson was elected vice-chair, and Circuit Judge John Emfinger of Brandon was elected secretary-treasurer.

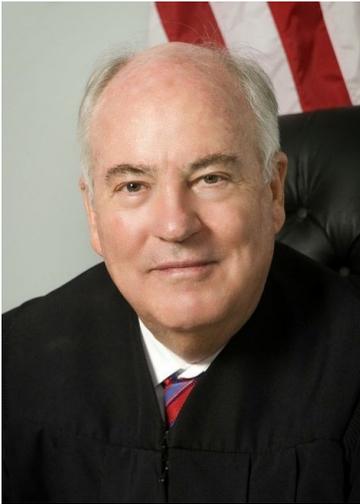
**Officers of the Conference of Chancery Judges are, left to right, Chancellor Joseph Kilgore, vice-chair; Chancellor Jacqueline Mask, chair; and Chancellor John Hatcher, secretary-treasurer.**

Judicial conferences meet in April and October for continuing

education training, and periodically during other times of the year to discuss legal and judicial issues. They make recommendations on issues affecting their courts.

Judge Mask previously served as vice-chair of the Conference of Chancery Judges. She is the senior chancellor of the First Chancery District, which includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Tishomingo and Union counties. She has served as a chancellor for more than 17 years. She serves on the Access to Justice Commission, where she has taken a leading role in efforts to make the judicial system more accessible to self-represented litigants who can't afford to hire attorneys to represent them. She was in private law practice for 16 years before she was elected to the bench. She served for 15 years as a Youth Court public defender. She is a graduate of Mississippi University for Women and the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Judge Kilgore has served for almost six years as a chancellor of the Sixth Chancery District, which includes Attala, Carroll, Choctaw, Kemper, Neshoba and Winston counties. He previously served as a special master in Chancery Court and as a Kemper County Youth Court referee. He served on the planning team for the Choctaw Healing to Wellness Drug Court. He was special prosecutor for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Neshoba County Justice Court and Philadelphia Municipal Court. He served as Board Attorney for the Philadelphia Public School District and Philadelphia Utilities. He served as president of the Neshoba



**Judge Prentiss Harrell**

County Bar Association and vice-president of the Choctaw Bar Association.

Judge Hatcher has served as a chancellor for nine years in the First Chancery District. He began his private law practice in Booneville in 1973. He served for 16 years as city prosecutor for Baldwin, city attorney for Marietta, and Prentiss County prosecutor. He was town attorney of Farmington for eight years. He is former president of the First Judicial District Bar Association. The Delta State University graduate taught school for a year at Duck Hill, then earned a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Judge Harrell previously served as vice-chair of the Conference of Circuit Judges. He is the senior circuit judge of the 15<sup>th</sup> Circuit District, which includes Jefferson Davis, Lamar, Lawrence, Marion and Pearl River counties. He has served for more than nine years as a circuit judge. He previously served for nine years as county attorney for Lamar County. He is a graduate of William Carey University and the Mississippi College School of Law. He entered law school after a career in private business, primarily real estate and construction.



**Judge Winston Kidd**

Judge Kidd has served as a circuit judge of the Seventh Circuit District of Hinds County for more than 15 years. He was in private law practice in Jackson for 10 years before he was appointed to the bench in 2001. He teaches pretrial practice as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law. He is former president of the Magnolia Bar Association. He earned an undergraduate degree in respiratory therapy from the University of Mississippi and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Emfinger has been a circuit judge of the 20th Circuit Court District of Rankin and Madison counties for more than five years. He previously served for 14 years as an assistant district attorney for the 20th District. He worked for nearly 10 years as a special assistant attorney general, serving in the attorney general's Criminal Division, in the State and Local Government Section, and later as director of the attorney general's Public Integrity Division. He worked for a year as a staff attorney in the office of the Mississippi Secretary of State. He was in private law practice for about seven years. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Mississippi College and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law.



**Judge John Emfinger**